UP AND COMER

Crow sneaks up on Grand Am field

In first season, he ranks 7th in points

By TIM HADDOCK
Signal Staff Writer

SAUGUS — When Rick Crow was younger, he would sneak into the pit area of Saugus Speedway to help the drivers work on their cars.

Even though at 15 he wasn't old enough to be in the area, it didn't deter the young Crow. He'd climb the fences that surrounded the pits and help out such racers as Alan Thacker and Tommy O'Mara.

"Out of all the classes I've run, this is the toughest. The cars are fidgety. When you think you got a hold of it, it comes up and bites you."

— Rick Crow

Photos by GARY THORNHILL/The Signal

Canyon Country racer Rick Crow has participated in virtually every division at Saugus Speedway since 1987. He recently won his first Grand American Modified feature race and ranks seventh in points.

"When I was a kid, I used to follow them," Crow said.

Now at age 31, Crow is sneaking past cars on the Grand American Modified circuit at Saugus Speedway and few can stop him.

The Canyon High graduate earned his first feature win two weeks ago to go along with his five heat victories. Crow, who still lives in Canyon Country, has vaulted into the top 10 at No. 7 after starting the season in unimpressive fashion.

"I'm just now getting it figured out," said Crow who has run almost every class of car at Saugus Speedway since 1986. This is his rookie season racing Grand American Modified cars.

He started racing Jalopes in 1986 and transferred to Hobby Stocks in 1987, where he finished second in points.

points in 1989. He moved to Pro Stock in 1990 and then to the Sportsman class for part of the 1991 season.

"I didn't care for that," Crow said of the Sportsman class, which will be eliminated next season. "It costs too much money for these guys to race (in the Sportsman class). They rip up their equipment."

And he didn't want to race figure eights, so he decided to enter the Grand Am division this season.

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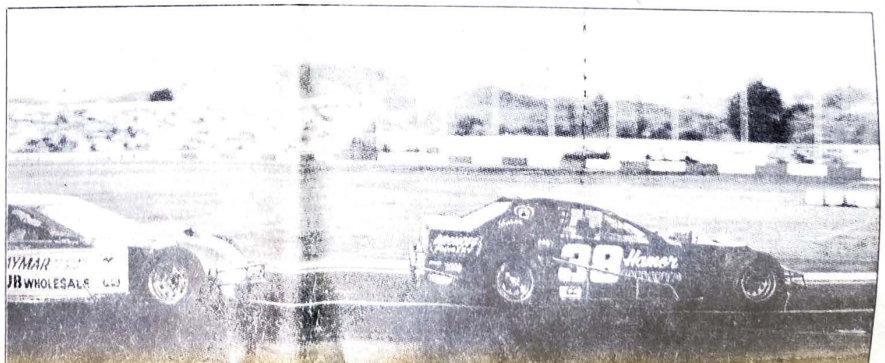

Weather cancels Spartans contest

BURNSVILLE, Minn. — The rains came Friday morning and washed out the Santa Clarita Spartans' final baseball game in the 14-and-under Amateur Athletic Union National Championships.

The Spartans, who were defeated twice on Thursday and eliminated from advancing to the quarterfinals, led Champlin Park, Minn., 1-0 in the bottom of the second with one out and two men on when the rains came.

Andy Davidson started for Santa Clarita, but left in the second with a sore arm. Travis Richardson struck out two and yielded a hit in the second. He also picked a runner off second base to end the inning.

Jeff Gaeta singled and scored on Josh Underwood's base hit in the second.

Acting Burnsville Mayor Charles Crichton attended the game and sa in the Spartans' dugout as an honor ary co-coach. Santa Clarita Mayo George Pederson was expected attend, but the inclement weath most likely kept him away.

Two teams from Southern C fornia did reach today's semifin Rancho Cucamonga and Font The Spartans finished behind t teams at the qualifying tournan earlier this year.

Mike Granger (5-for-10) Beau Gebel (2-for-4) each hit for the Spartans. Granger also an on-base percentage of .583. rian DeLaTorre had a team-high ven hits, while Bobby Grav Gaeta and Granger each had fi DeLaTorre scored eight runs a Chris Wright received six walk

Adam Green (6⅓ innings), De LaTorre (5⅓), Davidson (six) an Richardson (one) each posted a 0.00 ERA. Graves struck out a team-high